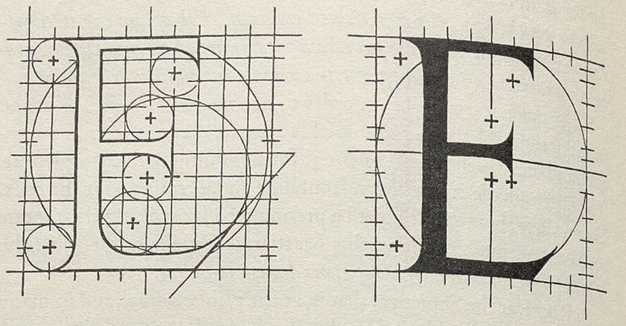

THE letter E, here drawn, formed from the I alone, & from which the F and the L can be made, is the second vowel in Greek & Latin alphabetical order, and is of the same shape and proportions both in Greek and in Latin. In *lettre de forme,* or *bastarde,* it must be made otherwise. The Latins borrowed it from the Greeks, as they did almost all the other letters. It is seven units and a half in breadth, and must have seven centres whereon to set the foot of the compass, as I have indicated them, in order to be made in its entirety. Some ancient writers make it without a curve and with a right angle on the inner side, below, as I have drawn it in the black E, beside the other. Martianus Capella says: E *spiritus facit lingua paululum pressione.** 'E,' he says, 'is pronounced by holding the tongue free between the palate & the upper concavity and the back of the mouth, causing the voice to come forth softly.' I have written above how the Lyonnais women often pronounce A for E; also, the Normans E for Oy, & have given examples thereof. I find, further, that the Picard says V [U] for E, and pronounces it with the aspirate, saying 'Chu garchon' for 'Ce garcon.' The Lorrainers, & the Scots, when speaking French,—or, at least, thinking that they are speaking it,—almost always omit to pronounce the E when it is at the end of words. The Lorrainers say: 'Sus lherbet,' 'De ma muset,' 'Vne chansonet,' 'Ay dict mon comper,' 'Ma comer ioliet,' and 'Frisquet, quen dictes vous?' instead of saying: 'Sus lherbete,' 'De ma musete,' 'Vne chansonnete,' 'Ay dict mon compere,' 'Ma comere ioliete,' and 'Frisquete, quen dictes vous?' Also, if they wish to say 'Simone,' they pronounce it 'Simon'; 'Lione,' 'Lion'; 'Bone,' 'Bon'; which is wrong in French, according to

* *The text has 'pressiore'—probably a misprint.*

the Latin rule, which requires that the masculine gender be neither written nor spoken for the feminine, else one would be guilty of the vice of barbarism, which is not permissible in correct language. The Scots say: 'Mon per et ma mer, et mes deux seurs Robin et Caterin mont escript vng pair de letr,' instead of saying: 'Mon pere et ma mere et mes deux seurs Robine et Caterine mont escript vne paire de letres.' But such an error is to be forgiven them, because of their ignorance of the French language, and the difficulty of their wonted pronunciation in their mother-tongue. There may be many such vicious pronunciations, which I leave to those more learned than I, to set them down in writing and to be well remembered; & I come to the Latins, who said in ancient times—not at all like the Picard—E for V [U], when they said and wrote *Auger* and *Augeratus,* for *Augur* & *Auguratus.* Priscian is a good witness to this in his first book, in the chapter *De literarum commutatione,* when he says: *In* E *transit* V, *vt Pondus, Ponderis; Deierat, Peierat, pro Deiurat, Peiurat; Labrum, Labellum; Sacrum, Sacellum. Antiqui Auger, et Augeratus, pro Augur et Auguratus dicebant.** * I, VI, 36.

E Has three different sounds in French pronunciation and rhyme, as the author of the *Book of the Game of Chess* has shown very happily in the chapter wherein he treats of the quality of rhymes, when he says what follows: 'We must understand that this vowel called E can vary its sound, or be pronounced, in three ways, forasmuch as we have a single figure, or a single letter, which offers us all these three ways. The first is when we give it its proper sound—perfect, principal and premier, as we commonly call it; as when we say *beaulte,* or *loyaulte.* The second way is when, in pronouncing it, we draw it out beyond its proper sound aforesaid; just as when we say *Matinee* or *Robine,* & other like words. And in these two cases the said vowel causes the number and measure of the metre to change, because the sound is in itself full and perfect, & thus it holds and occupies the place of an entire syllable. And the third way is when, in pronouncing the said vowel, it does not have the vowel sound so plainly, and, as it were, loses its sound, as when we say, *Nature, Creature, Villennie,* or *Felonnie,* and so in many different forms. And in this case the said vowel, thus pronounced, does not cause the number of the preceding syllables to change, nor the measure. And sometimes all three of these ways of presenting the E are shown in a single word, just as if we should say: 'Le ciel est bien estelle;' 'Cest fin or esmere;' and many other like words.†

† *This is all very far from clear—to the translator, at least; it might have been elucidated somewhat, if Tory had invented a little earlier the use of accents to indicate the 'manières' of pronouncing 'the said vowels'; and if some of the words that he or, in this case, his authority uses had not vanished from the language.*

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